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ABSTRACT

Community colleges should return to the philosophy of localism and team up with community agencies to play an active role in community planning and development. Rural colleges, which are governed by local boards that are more prone to receive immediate community pressure than their urban counterparts, are more suited to the achievement of this goal. While there are contradictory views of the value of the community services function of the colleges, many exemplary practices of community-based education can be cited, particularly in five areas: (1) decision-making involvement, whereby colleges become community resource centers for use by citizens to improve their capacity for participation in government; (2) program cooperation with government agencies to share expertise and/or facilities in order to achieve common goals; (3) cooperation with industry to provide vocational training programs; (4) programs for senior citizens which tap the professional skills of retirees; and (5) cooperative arrangements with museums and libraries for purposes such as the preservation of local history. Such programs can only be instituted after a college has ascertained community needs, determined the extent of current services, prioritized the community service function within the college's objectives, and determined the special attributes necessary for community development specialists. (JP)

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COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION: A TEAM APPROACH

by

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I think the topic of this workshop, "Community-Based Education: A Team Approach", is so appropriate especially in light of the changing role of the community college. Community-based planning calls for a full partnership of the college, the community, business and other educational and governmental agencies in determining the needs of the community, what roles, if any, the college should play in fulfilling those needs, and how best these needs can be accomplished. It is my firm belief that this goal is much more attainable in a rural, small setting than it is in an urban situation and this point will be elaborated upon further later on.

I thought it was noteworthy that Gollattscheck stated that:

> Before community-based educational programs, in all their aspects, can be deemed worthy of public support, those who govern and fund higher education will have to overcome a narrow view of the mission of postsecondary education which has been (1) elitist, in the sense that it has been more acceptable to spend public funds on the student who can achieve the most (2) aimed primarily at the young under the assumption that education should be preparation for life rather than a process carried on throughout life (3) Oriented toward an education which leads to a degree or to preparation for work ignoring the values inherent in education for self-improvement, enrichment, and recreation.

What is perceived is the marginal nature of adult education activities at community colleges and I am sure that the legislative view probably centers about their efforts being evening colleges, extension activities, community relations, or other methods of securing additional funding. Not only does higher education have to change their priorities but so do they have to educate the "legislator" aspect of education. There is no question that the concept of having teams at this conference is an effective one since it is only when the colleges and the communities marry that there can be effective community renewal. We know that in small, rural communities as people become obsolete and ineffective, entire communities become obsolete and states as well as entire regions weaken. Gollattscheck has again stated that community-based implies more than anything a special relationship between the educational

institution and the community -- a relationship in which the institution determines its direction and develops its program through interaction with the community. The college is no longer a provider of just services, but instead is a cooperator with the community -- it is a co-participant with the community and becomes involved in all steps of community-based education.

In a rural setting, the college must emphasize its role as a change agent. In essence it does become a community service when it attempts to merge community services and life-long learning.

But rural community colleges are governed by local boards and chief executive officers who are prone to almost immediate community pressure. Community colleges vary widely in their form of governance with decision making power residing at the institutional, local and/or state levels or shared by all three. But they do have one trait in common and that is a very close relationship with their constituency. This relationship tends to vary as the size of the college system increases or decreases. As the system size increases the visability of lay opposition groups tends to decrease and the system bureaucracy, the social distance to the college authorities and the ability of the system to maintain business as usual in the face of opposition tends to increase. It has been found, for example, that external rather than internal issues most often excite citizen concern and activity in college affairs. It has been noted that most community groups and organizations active in Chicago politics, for example, were found to be only peripherally interested in education, but were centrally concerned about the consequences of college policy for the ecology of neighborhoods. The research has shown the opinion of the public tends to carry as much and often more weight than the expertise of the professionals who are hired by these institutions to study and recommend solutions to such issues as construction of facilities and finances.

In addition, the mass media are crucial to community relations not only as a vehicle for instruction, but in terms of colleges working co-

operatively with the community. Certainly no one in the media is going to argue against the goal of building citizen understanding of the services that colleges provide and how the services are financed.

Differences Among Institutions

Community colleges should become oriented to the concept of community-based performance oriented education and should become instruments for the development of communities and individuals. This position represents a return of the community colleges to the philosophy of localism that characterized their development in an earlier day. Such a move will not be without problems as evidenced in two basic questions posed by Glazier: (1) What are the criteria for success and how do we measure output and summarize it for fiscal, legal and managerial purposes? (2) If we are to become something different, how accomodating is the current public policy climate in which we operate? More emphasis must be placed on community educational needs and the development of promotional delivery and evaluation techniques. To say that we are small is not an appropriate excuse for doing nothing. Art Cohen uses the example of the gentleman who is 5'8" and weighs 160 lbs. who looks at the other gentleman who is 6'2" and weighs 190 lbs. He says, "I am obviously different therefore I must have different problems, but I'm not sure what they are." It is my contention that the difference is in degree rather than in kind.

Currently, most non-urban community colleges have service commitments which extend beyond the campus community, yet the mission of these colleges as locally controlled and locally responsive institutions vitally persists. Gunday Myran, president of the National Council on Community Service, has generically identified the community-based educational process as the mode which will "incorporate work and other community experiences into the learning process, and utilize community agencies and institutions as experiential learning centers, and utilize resource persons from the community in the instructional program."

Of interest is the fact that the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education has taken somewhat of a contradictory view to that of the AACJC. Two reports dealing directly with community colleges concluded that the community service function of the colleges had failed to distinguish themselves. In the Carnegie Report it was advocated that rural colleges particularly should be campus-based; such colleges should provide dormitories for students from the rural noncampus communities of the college district. This obviously runs counter to the AACJC notion of local service, local control, and community-based planning. Unfortunately, I believe the error with the Carnegie Commission Report is that these writers discuss the rural areas of community college districts as if only one town comprised the service area and that town is invariably protypic. The Carnegie Commission campus-based philosophy and AACJC's community-based philosophy have their antecedents in the unresolved conflict of the role of community services in community colleges. It is not surprising that this is the case since social scientists as well as two-year college experts have yet to agree on the definition of what constitutes a community. Sociologists have employed no less than 16 concepts in formulating more than 94 definitions of community. And,unfortunately, the notion of a rural service area usually winds up to be overly simplistic. Primary weaknesses of the urban/rural distinctions in analyzing social organization, including local input to college programs, are that they de-emphasize the variation among communities and that they tend to view variables within a community as inherently independent rather than potentially independent of one another. Based upon a national survey, it was found that the community-based policies, recommended by AACJC, did not represent new directions for colleges. That, in fact, these recommendations functioned as policies for most colleges and, that the relationship between rural, geographically isolated regions, and lack of community outreach policies as suggested by report to the Carnegie Commission, did not exist in the colleges examined.

Community-based education often expresses itself in community responsiveness to programming. Yet, if the local clientele lack communal cohesiveness, a needs assessment survey to identify group interests

will fail to provide relevant information. In such situations colleges cannot afford merely to respond. The college must assume leadership in community development in identifying elements for communal organization and in enhancing the quality of life of the area. Only by encouraging social cohesion in atomized communities can a college establish the popular base to sustain itself as a locally controlled institution.

The philosophy of community education, as in many rural areas, moved from programmatic emphasis to community problem solving and improving the quality of community life. With this move serious problems have been identified and that is development of the community problem solving aspect of community education. Small, rural towns tend to be somewhat insecure and this insecurity is often reflected in a city's or town's resistence to cooperative efforts or attempts to help them perform their responsibilities. This resistence to cooperation may further proliferate the lack of skills that prevent community education from making in-roads in a community.

Community development is a process and a community-based college and community education must be founded on the philosophy of thinking of themselves as part of the community instead as a part from it and one in which it is an institution that is giving of itself. The community and the college must have a line between them that is so grey and so fuzzy that no one knows where the college begins and the community ends and vise versa. The college becomes a part of the life of the community and every member of the institution becomes an ambassador who is actively participating in the life of the community which the institution was designed to serve.

Exemplary Practices

Involvement In Local Decision Making

Six community colleges will attempt in the next three years to prove that they can help citizens to help themselves by becoming actively involved in the local decision-making process.

Selected as models for a national self-help project, the colleges will provide mechanisms to assist citizens in improving their lives

and their communities. They will, in effect, become "one-stop shopping centers" for information, advice, and interaction on problems and concerns in their localities.

They were chosen by the National Self-Help Resource Center and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington-based partners in the project supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan. The six demonstration institutions are:

Lawson State Community College, Birmingham, Alabama; Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, Ohio; Wenatchee Valley College, Wenatchee, Washington; Colorado Mountain College, Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Southeast Community College, Cumberland, Kentucky; and San Juan College, a campus of New Mexico State University, Farmington.

The sites represent a diversity in terms of geography, constituency, approaches to the community resource center concept, and size.

Wenatchee, Colorado Mountain, Southeast, and San Juan are in the small/rural category.

The project will test the viability of community colleges as community-based resource centers to improve the capacity for citizen participation in local decision-making through information exchange, citizen dialogue, networking among individuals and groups, and alliance-building.

The resource center concept involves neighborhood units that provide citizen access to information, generates community dialogue, and offers technical training for citizen involvement.

With strong support from local government, women's groups, business and civic leaders, Wenatchee Valley College's resource center will focus on district and regional issues -- including a controversial riverfront development, a new form of city government, and a community/convention center. A partners committee of community agencies will act as a policy body for the work.

Colorado Mountain College will build on its established educational brokering service in the development of its resource center. College staff and students, community groups, business people and ordinary

citizens will work to bring community forces together to resolve conflicts and improve relations. The college serves affluent resort areas (Vail and Aspen) as well as traditional mining and ranching areas.

Kentucky's Southeast Community College serves a rural Appalachian community characterized by undereducation, underemployment and low incomes resulting from the "boom or bust" economy tied to coal mining. Major communication gaps exist because of geographical as well as cultural gaps. A delivery system for dissemination of information, scheduling community forums and development of a hot-line telephone information and referral system are among the activities which will be offered to break the physical and psychologial -- isolation of the area and change the negative expectations and attitudes of many of the citizens.

Building on its successful Energy Information Center, San Juan College will develop a full-fledged center to deal with problems of high unemployment, heavy population growth, low education, poor communication and the lack of a centralized information base. San Juan operates in a unique setting, serving a county that covers 5,516 square miles and includes over one-half of the Navajo Indian Reservation. The county is rich in energy resources -- coal, gas, uranium, water -- but information about these resources as well as about services and programs is minimal.

Programs In Cooperation With Other Agencies

It is good use of resources to cooperate with other agencies in carrying out needed functions and programs. The college has the expertise and the agencies have the need. Either or both may have the physical facilities available.

In a rural area where facilities are often limited, Three Rivers Community College has demonstrated that cooperation with business, industry, municipal government, and federal programs can mean an entire campus. After eleven years as a "storefront" college, a permanent campus is under construction on seventy wooded acres near the edge of Polar Bluff.

A library building is being planned. This facility will be constructed from funds raised through private donations.

A third building will be constructed on the campus by Poplar Bluff Industries, Inc., a subsidiary of the Chamber of Commerce. The facility, which will house occupational classrooms and laboratories, will be owned by Poplar Bluff Industries and leased to the college. At the end of ten years, the college will have the option of purchasing the facility for $1.00.

Recently, officials from the college, the city of Poplar Bluff and interested citizens of the community met to discuss the possibility of constructing a multipurpose community center on the college campus. The propostion would require the college to provide the land for the city-owned facility. In return for the land, the college would have use of the facility for drama, music and special programs.

Not even the earth moving, clearing and road building work is being provided from the usual sources. The heavy equipment crew on the Three Rivers Community College campus is from the Mingo Job Corps Center.

T.V.A. Programs With Federal Agencies, Labor Unions--Roane State Community College (Tennessee)

Roane State is involved in a pilot program for the training of operating engineering technicians at a nuclear power plant site. This project purports to be the first in the nation to involve cooperation of a federal agency, labor unions, and a community college.

Career Exploration Program With Employment Commission--Mountain Empire Community College (Virginia)

In cooperation with the Virginia Employment Commission, Mountain Empire Community College is conducting a series of Career Exploration Days for high school seniors.

Facility With Y.M.C.A.--Highland Community College (Illinois)

Highland paid $1.7 million and the Y.M.C.A. $1.5 million for a single facility to be used jointly. Highland owns the structure and the Y has a 50 year lease to operate its program and provide instruction (under contract) for the college P.E. program. The result is that both insti-

tutions have a much finer facility available than either would have otherwise.

Mid-Michigan Community College (Michigan)

The college functions as the coordinating agency for a seven-county Substance Abuse Services Program.

Coal Mine Training for State and Federal Agencies

The Roane State mining effort will involve cooperative arrangements with the Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Soil Conservation Agency, Department of the Interior, Tennessee Department of Labor and the Tennessee Conservation Department.

Library Merger With County--Mississippi County College (Arkansas)

Very few colleges function without a central ibrary on campus; Mississippi County Community College does.

The college library merged with the county library system. One of the factors in opting for the combined library system was, of course, cost. With today's spiraling costs, the federal grant and bond issue just didn't produce enough to include a suitable library with the college's solar energy system.

Administers Community Education--Hobbing Community College (Minnesota)

The college is employed by the local school district to administer a tax-supported community education program. This is an example of cooperative planning for community services-community education.

City/College Computer Cooperation--Bay de Noc Community College (Michigan)

The City of Escanaba, Michigan, and Bay de Noc Community College have cooperated on the joint purchase and use of an I.B.M. Systems 32 Computer.

Cooperation With The City In Treating The Elm Trees-- Bay de Noc Community College (Michigan)

In 1977, the college addressed the problem of saving elm trees in the cities of Escanaba and Gladstone. Both cities have lost a substantial number of elm trees to Dutch Elm Disease and the problem seemed to be getting critically worse. To correct the problem, the college, through a small grant from the Rural Development Administration, purchased treatment equipment and made the equipment available to the two cities.

Programs With Industry

Analysis Of Potential For Industry--Highland Community College (Illinois)

Highland Community College was awarded an Economic Development Grant to assist the surrounding communities in their efforts to analyze their various potentials and to attract industry into the area.

The northwest corner of Illinois has long lacked sufficient job opportunities to satisfy the needs of its populace, and Highland is assisting in finding solutions to this problem.

Start-Up Training For New Industry--Gulf Coast Junior College (Mississippi)

In conjunction with the company, the college identifies the jobs, lists the tasks, analyzes each task, writes perfcrmance objectives, prepares the instructional materials, and measures the trainee's performance.

Lumber Jack College--Bay de Noc Community College (Michigan)

A wood harvest training program involves a 160 hour program. This project had the cooperation of the Mead Paper Company, Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Forest Service, and Michigan State University. The program had assistance of the Rural Development Administration who provided $10,000 in financing the project.

Contracted Vocational Education Program--Bay de Noc Community College

Edison televises (video-tapes) instructions for using manufacturing lab equipment.

Program Development To Meet Local Needs of Industry--Olney Central College (Illinois)

Many, many community colleges cooperate with industry by starting vocational programs needed to support local industries or business; three were triggered by acute local needs.

The Industrial Maintenance program trains physical plant supervisors and maintenance men for local industry. The Institutional Management Program trains extended health care facility managers and owners in business practices. The Construction Energy Program produces technicians with basic skills in carpentry, welding, masonry, and electricity who can install the energy saving devices now being used in the residential construction industry.

Programs For Senior Citizens

The Talent Bank--Edison Community College (Florida)

This innovative program is designed to recruit, screen and utilize the highly skilled professionals who retire in the Fort Myers area. This untapped wealth of human resource finds activity in the college as advisors on county committees and in leadership roles for local volunteer organizations.

Focal Point on Aging--College of the Siskiyous (California)

The college established "Focal Point on Aging" on campus as the agent for the county. Direct support courses for senior citizens are offered.

Museums And Artifacts

In almost every instance, the sponsorship of such institutions performs still another function--the preservation of history. That is a service of inestimable value.

Museum, Art Collection--Crowder College (Missouri)

The museum was founded in 1970 and provides the college and the community with changing exhibits throughout the year. These exhibits are prepared for and arranged through the Missouri State Council of the Arts, the College Cultural Affairs Committee, the Student Senate, and other sources. Local exhibits are arranged regularly to supplement special shows. Also available from the State Council are special shows which are lent to schools in the two-county college area.

Appalachians Learning Laboratory--Alice Lloyd College (Kentucky)

All programs have as their goals to encourage students to be both learners and contributors, to preserve a heritage, to understand the past as a guide to planning the future and to use the community as a resource.

Through these programs students learn while actively engaged in purposeful field work. They examine and research the dynamics of life in Appalachia as preparation for life in a larger society.

It is obvious that community-based education can only be achieved through better coordination and cooperation in program planning. Greater attention to needs among the rural poor, wider outreach through extension centers and other means, new course sequences, sharing of facilities with the community, etcetera.

Colleges need to <u>first</u> ascertain the value of various activities that might be useful as a part of community development programs. <u>Second</u>, determine the extent of community development services now being provided and the extent to which they should be rendered. <u>Third</u>, discover the priority that community services should be assigned among the various community college responsibilities. And, <u>fourth</u>, determine any special attributes necessary for community development specialists. We need to ask ourselves what strategies can be effectively used by a rural community college in extending its services to its service area and what kinds of services can be established. Community-based educators must be creative, innovative, receptive, responsive and must have a pioneering attitude in serving for and serving linkages. Indeed, one area that has had little exploration is the relationship between the colleges and the secondary schools. While there has been no outright feuding between these two groups, there has been little if any cooperation. It is a very rich field that can bring forth an excellent crop of facets of community-based education especially with tighter tax dollars.

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